INFORMATION LINK

Information Services Division

Telecommunication Services

IVR DOES MORE WITH LESS
Terese Birnbaum

Press one for information on IVR, press two for the benefits of IVR, press three ... you get the picture. Just as there is no way to slow down the fast approaching millennium, there is no way to avoid these ever popular voice processing applications. Everyone who uses a telephone is likely to encounter some form of automation. As we move into the future you will see more of this automated technology being used. Since there is no way to avoid it, let's understand it so we can reap the benefits of voice processing technologies.

What is IVR?
IVR is short for Interactive Voice Response. Think of IVR as a voice computer. Where a computer has a keyboard for entering information, an IVR uses remote touchtone telephones. Where a computer has a screen for showing the results, an IVR uses a prerecorded human voice or a synthesized voice (computerized voice). Recordings are used for repetitive messages such as, "Thanks for calling ISD. Press one for Telecommunications, press two for Customer Services." Synthesized voice (also called Text-to-Speech) is used for reading information from files which contain information that can't be put into neat "sound bites," like numbers and dates. Whatever a computer can do, an IVR can do too. The only limitation on an IVR is that you can't present as many alternatives on a phone as you can on a screen. The caller simply can not remember more than a few options. IVR systems allow individuals to access information in an organization's computer database and

to receive that information either verbally using an ordinary touchtone phone or on a PC via the Internet. Customers can execute certain transactions on-line without the intervention of customer service personnel.

Today's IVR system capabilities have expanded to include speech recognition, Internet, and faxback. IVR is one aspect of voice processing. Voice processing also includes voice mail and automated attendant.

Benefits of IVR
1. Reduces costs.
2. Improves access to information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. IVR never goes on vacation.
3. Enhances customer service.
4. Better utilization of telephone and computer systems' capabilities. Simple caller requests are automated which saves staff time and energy.
5. Improves productivity of customer support staff and reduces the need to increase staff for peak periods.
6. Provides more services in less time and at lower costs.
7. Reduces errors in data capture/input, with feedback for valid entries.

The benefits of Interactive Voice Response are obvious. By automating the retrieval and processing of information by phone, you can give data a voice and add intelligence to the phone call.

Uses of IVR
The number of IVR applications is seemingly unlimited. Banks were some of the first organizations to utilize this technology. Perhaps you have called up your bank and with the use of this technology received your account information over

the telephone. Today, the financial community continues to be one of the largest users of the technology. A large number of other industries have joined in the aggressive use of IVR technology.

Many states have installed IVR systems and have deployed a variety of applications, including the following:

Labor / Employment Security / Unemployment Insurance
- Claims Filing
- Job Opportunities
- Appointment Scheduling
- Office Locations & Hours
- General Information

Taxation & Finance
- Tax Filing
- Refund Information
- Forms Ordering
- Publications Requests

Workers Compensation
- Claims Status & Payments
- Remittance Advice

Motor Vehicle
- Vehicle Registration & License Renewals
- General Announcements

Child Support Enforcement
- Status of Payment to custodial parent
- Report of Delinquencies
- Withholding/Enforcement Inquiries
- Pay Inquiries on Amounts Owed
- Transferred Funds Confirmation

Health Services
- Immunization Status
- Immunization Requirements
- Immunization Locations

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Ready or Not?

Not sure if this information has encouraged you to implement an application for an IVR system? We have all heard the familiar phrase, "You'll never get my customers to call that thing." Well time has proven that to be wrong. In fact, customers are calling it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Your customers prefer using your voice processing application because it is faster, more accurate, and won't take bathroom breaks. IVR applications can help with the simple repetitive tasks that could free staff to be accessible for more highly evolved assignments.

ISD's IVR Direction

ISD has formed an IVR Selection Committee. This committee is tasked with the evaluation and selection of a new IVR system. ISD's IVR system that is currently in place has two applications running, is outdated, and is not year 2000 complaint. ISD plans on having a new system up and running by the end of 1998.

ISD believes that there are powerful business reasons to get into voice processing today! Voice processing is no longer a luxury or a gimmick. It's an integral part of the way successful companies are staying successful.

BOTTOM LINE!

ISD believes that voice processing is the way to help your agency "DO MORE WITH LESS." Voice processing technology is available — put it to work for you today.

DIAL-UP SERVICE
Mike Ressler

Effective February 1, 1998, Information Services Division began providing authentication of our dial-up network access service. This authentication is accomplished by implementing a user-id and a password.

The user-id will cost $8.00 per month beginning July 1, 1998. Local calls will be at no charge to the user and long distance calls via an 800 number will be charged out at 9 cents per minute. The 800 service fee began February 1, 1998 and will be

reflected on the ISD Data Processing Bill with call summary records displayed on the CD1-630-UU report.

Requests for this service should be submitted in writing to Al Veit.

IN PRAISE OF PRAISE

An excellent way to reinforce good work is to recognize it with a heartfelt compliment. This simple act can increase harmony within a work group or between departments. It will also encourage people to focus more attention on getting other jobs done right. Here are some pointers on how to give high-quality praise:

⇨ **Be specific.** Say: "The three additional points you added to that report really explained a difficult concept well." This means much more than just saying "Nice work!"

⇨ **Be generous.** When you hear a compliment about a coworker who isn't present, find that individual and share the praise.

⇨ **Put it in writing.** To reinforce a verbal compliment, follow it up with a memo and a copy to appropriate associates and superiors.

Reprinted from "Quality 1st".

Administrative Services

HP PALMTOP COMPUTING
Sam Stoxen

Tired of dragging your laptop computer around from place to place? Want to have Word, Excel, PowerPoint, mail messages, and your schedule at your command when you are on the road?

Would you like to access the Internet, fax a document, or access your PC at work from other places?

Would you like to jot yourself a quick note when you are away from the office?

Well! I have an unusual solution for you. I have been using a HP 320LX Palmtop for a while. Yes, it has all of the above features and you can use the modem to dial into the

Internet via the ISD dial-up servers or send a fax. I used the Windows CE version of pcAnywhere to access my desktop as well as surf the net for information via Microsoft Pocket Internet Explorer. The fax program is very easy to use and will send a fax anywhere you want. The only problems that I can see are the limited amount of storage space for files on the Palmtop and the screen is in black and white. Well, there is a problem in accessing the ISD mainframe but that comes later.

The size is 7.2 x 3.67 x 1.1 inches and it fits into a pocket or briefcase fairly easily. However, I would recommend that you take the power converter on the road because the modem draws a lot more power than the batteries can handle. The weight is 16 ounces. I think that most people can handle carrying that around.

When you get back to the office, you simply plug it into the docking station to get your files on the palmtop and your desktop back into sync. The docking cradle that comes with the 320LX plugs into the serial port on your desktop PC and takes very little room from the office space that you are usually trying to conserve. The files are stored in memory and are smaller versions of the Word, Excel, or PowerPoint software that you have on the desktop. The mail package will sync up with Outlook on the desktop for mail and Schedule+ 7.0a.

Printing is handled through the desktop PC, faxing to another site, or an infrared printer port on the Palmtop going to a laser printer.

The only communication problem that this device has today is in the mainframe emulation area. It doesn't work to get to the mainframe unless you go through your desktop PC using pcAnywhere.

Both the color and black and white models are described on the Hewlett Packard WWW page at:
http://www.hp.com/handheld/handheld_devices/index.html

If you would like to see a demonstration of the HP 320LX, LANRES, or a Network Computer, please call me at 328-4325.

DISASTER RECOVERY CONTRACT
Larry Lee

ISD will have a new disaster recovery contract in place on July 1, 1998. Recent upgrades in ISD's computer equipment prompted the need to change the existing contract. These upgrades include changes in the disk drives, tape library system, and a CPU upgrade. History has shown issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new contract to be more cost effective than upgrading an existing contract.

The RFP has been created and is being sent to five vendors, including our current vendor. ISD plans on awarding the new contract to one of the five vendors by May 15. It will cover the mainframe computer system, AS/400 computer system, Bank of North Dakota check processing system, state-wide network, and 20 client/server networks.

CELEBRATE RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT WEEK
Becky Lingle

Governor Ed Schafer proclaimed the week of April 5 - 11 as Records and Information Management Week. ISD Records Management plans to celebrate Records and Information Management Week by offering tours and training sessions for state employees.

Tours will be offered in the areas of forms design, imaging, and archival storage.

The training will include records management and open records sessions. The records management training will be offered twice for records coordinators or others who are interested in the field of records management. Topics include the responsibilities of records coordinators and the benefits of maintaining an active records management program.

All tours and training sessions are free to state employees.

If you are interested in attending any of the tours or training sessions mentioned above, please call Becky Lingle at 328-3585 to register.

CHANGES TO THE RETENTION OF MEDICAL RECORDS
Becky Lingle

After a recent request for information regarding the retention of employee medical records, I consulted Tom Mayer, Assistant Attorney General, for his interpretation of 29 C.F.R. 1910.20, redesignated 1910.1020. The Attorney General's Office has previously used 29 C.F.R. 1910.20 for the legal retention requirement for medical records.

In a letter dated February 12, 1998, Tom Mayer stated, "the OSHA Act does not apply to states or political subdivisions." Therefore, medical records should be retained for the same length of time that personnel records are maintained -- six years after last action.

Please contact the records analyst assigned to your state agency to update the retention requirement of medical records for your agency.

YEAR 2000 WEB PAGE
Larry Lee

The Year 2000 issue affects more than just software. All electronic hardware such as client/server, communications, security, and fire prevention equipment must be evaluated for Year 2000 compliance. Non-mainframe software such as PC and server software also has to be evaluated.

To address these compliance issues and provide a means for agencies to monitor progress, ISD is adding a page to its web site. The page is under construction with portions being available by March 20, 1998. It will show the Year 2000 compliancy of ISD's hardware and software, ISD's Year 2000 policy statement, and links to other Year 2000 web sites. Another important section describes the responsibilities that ISD and each agency has regarding Year 2000. Check the web page periodically for updates.

The address of the Year 2000 web page is www.state.nd.us/isd/y2k

WHERE IS YOUR E-MAIL BEING STORED?
Gary J. Vetter

ISD has received a number of questions regarding the retention of E-Mail. Because of the various E-Mail systems used within state government, there is not a simple answer to this issue. Rather, each agency or possibly even each user determines where their E-Mail is stored and how long it will be retained.

The first thing to know is that most E-mail messages do not vaporize simply because they are "deleted" from your In-Basket. Think of E-Mail as just another data file. Depending on the system you use, that data is stored on either your PC or your file server. Therefore, whenever your PC or file server is backed up, E-Mail is saved along with all of the other data. In addition, E-Mail can pass through numerous servers before it is ever delivered to your system. Again, depending on the system, it is possible that your E-Mail may be stored long enough on one of those servers to be backed up. To complicate this further, the amount of time that data is retained after a backup varies. Some systems are configured to only keep files for a couple of days while others store them for months. If you use ADSM to back-up your files onto the ISD mainframe, the *default* retention cycle is five generations.

Even if you *could* determine the retention period for all of your data, you still would not have the matter under control. What about the retention period on the systems used by all of the people with whom you exchange E-Mail? Any message you receive could have been saved by its originator, and any message you send could be saved by its recipient.

The only real solution is discretion. If you are comfortable having your E-Mail read by reporters for a newspaper, your supervisor, and your mother, then it is probably acceptable!

IMPROVED INTERNET ACCESS IN LOTUS CC:MAIL
Gary J. Vetter

Currently, all cc:Mail users have an Internet address similar to "ccmail.XXXX@ranch.state.nd.us". Although this address will remain valid for several months, everyone has been assigned a new E-Mail address. It will follow the format of "XXXX@state.nd.us". For example, if your address was "ccmail.jdoe@ranch.state.nd.us", your new address is PROBABLY "jdoe@state.nd.us". Note that because of duplication, some addresses will not follow this rule. Check the E-Mail section on the State of North Dakota's home page for a list of addresses for your agency. (http://www.state.nd.us/www/e-mail/agency.html)

In addition, the way to send messages to people on the Internet has also changed. In the past, you needed to select "SMTPMAIL" from the address book before entering the Internet address of your recipient. In order for messages to be sent from your new address, you need to select "HUB" from the address book (instead of "SMTPMAIL") and then continue addressing the message as usual.

The reasons for this change are as follows:
1. Shorter addresses are easier for people to remember and type.
2. Incoming message will now contain more complete header information.
3. Attachments will be more reliable, as the new gateway supports MIME encoding.
4. People can change departments or E-Mail systems without changing their E-Mail address.
5. The old method, Soft*Switch cc:Mail Gateway, would not work after the year 2000.

ARE WE READY FOR YEAR 2000?
Jim Heck

Most of the Year 2000 (Y2K) attention has been focused on mainframe applications and the effort to bring the large system applications into Y2K compliance. Information Services Division (ISD) is responsible for the mainframe applications and ISD expects to complete our Y2K compliance project by July 1, 1999. Each agency must also look at Y2K issues within their agency.

Agencies are responsible for Y2K compliance of computer programs written by contractors or their agency personnel. Licensed software (shrink wrap) running on agency personal computers or servers needs to be reviewed. Agencies must verify that the shrink wrapped software is or will be Y2K compliant. Another potential exposure is unauthorized software which may be loaded on personal computers by employees. Agencies should create an inventory of all software loaded on each computer and develop a process to assure that it is Y2K compliant. Computer hardware also needs to be checked for Y2K compliance. Agencies should review personal computers, servers, and functions controlled by a micro chip or clock-like device for Y2K compliance. Many vendors have dedicated areas of their World Wide Web sites to Y2K issues. They provide overviews of the Y2K problem as it relates to their own desktop hardware and software. Some will have fixes which can be downloaded. Agencies who brush off Y2K compliance, may be considered negligent and could face huge lawsuits when their systems fail. Do not rely on a silver bullet to solve your problems, but start today to bring your agency into Y2K compliance. ISD will have a Y2K web page containing frequently asked questions and other information to assist in your effort. Please contact Nancy Walz, Dennis Klipfel, or Jim Heck at 328-3190 if you have questions or need help with Y2K.

Development/Software Services

NORTH DAKOTA'S GREAT SEAL ON WWW PAGES
Vern Welder

The North Dakota Secretary of State's office is the custodian of North Dakota's Great Seal. The Secretary of State's office allows the use of the Great Seal on World Wide Web (WWW) home pages when used in its original format. It cannot be used in altered formats such as a watermark background for a page or with any other graphic alterations.

CHANGING OUR MIDDLEWARE
Vern Welder

ISD will be changing its middleware in April. We currently use Sybase's Direct Connect middleware and will change to IBM's Datajoiner middleware. Middleware is software that allows an ODBC data source such as Crystal Reports, MS-Access, Lotus 123, MS-EXCEL, etc. to access selected database management systems that may not be ODBC compliant. This version of Datajoiner will let customers use SQL statements to access DB2 or Oracle tables. In addition, they will be able to join data from Oracle and DB2 tables within one SQL statement.

We plan to start with Datajoiner for DB2 and Oracle, with the option of expanding to Datajoiner for ODBC datasources. We will not support middleware access to VSAM or IMS databases. We are also determining whether we should pilot test Software AG's ESQ product for accessing Adabas from an ODBC datasource.

ISD will contact customers using the Sybase middleware to plan their transition to Datajoiner.

TELECONFERENCING GUIDELINES TO HELP MAKE MEETINGS PLEASANT AND PRODUCTIVE

TO SCHEDULE A CALL
- Call ISD at 328-2000.
- Confirm a date and time.
- Have a participant list, and give an estimated length of call.
- Notify all participants of the conference call.

TO RECEIVE THE CALL
- The ISD Operator will call you – be ready to take the call 5-10 minutes before the scheduled meeting time. Please be prompt so that other participants do not wait for your arrival.

DURING THE CONFERENCE SETUP
- Stay on the line unless disconnected. You will be able to hear and speak with other participants during the conference setup or while others are being called. When setup is complete, the ISD Operator will do a roll call and announce that the conference is ready.

DURING THE CONFERENCE
- If you need to leave the conference early, simply hang up.
- Special tones may indicate when participants join or leave.
- If you are accidentally disconnected from the call, dial 328-2000 to get re-connected to the call.

FOR OPERATOR ASSISTANCE
- Report any reception or transmission problems to the ISD Operator at 328-2000.
- If you can't reach the ISD Operator, call the trouble number below:
  ### ISD TROUBLE NUMBER:
  ### 701-328-3200

SPECIAL POINTERS
- If you use a speaker phone, be familiar with its operation beforehand.
- Make sure you are in a quiet room with no background noises.
- Speak directly into your speaker phone microphone. Handle your telephone handset carefully; excessive movement or jostling will create noises.

- Avoid using extension telephones (a second telephone on the same line at the same time). This decreases the phone line volume level and produces conference listening difficulties overall.
- If you plan to have a large group of people at your site, you can reserve speaker phone equipment from ISD. If you would like more information, contact ISD staff at 328-2000.
- Keep the conference moving ahead and interactive. Read the following moderator or participant tips to improve your conference call.

MODERATOR TIPS
- Have a participant list and advance materials.
- Mark your agenda copy with a time estimate after each item.
- Open the meeting; welcome participants.
- Introduce speakers.
- Keep the meeting on track and on schedule.
- Poll sites for comments and/or questions whenever appropriate.
- Direct questions to a specific individual or group rather than to the conference at large.
- When you ask a question, wait about 10 seconds for a reply – people may need time to formulate their responses.
- Summarize the meeting.
- Thank all participants.

PARTICIPANT TIPS
- Have an agenda and other advance materials.
- Identify yourself whenever you speak.
- Remember, you are talking with more than one person.

BILLING INFORMATION
- ISD charges $5.00 per party for in-state calls and out-of-state calls.
- Teleconferences cancelled with less than 24-hour notice will be charged.
- Calls that are placed to parties that are scheduled for a conference call, but are unable to be reached, will be charged.

ISD EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Name: Dorothy Vetter

Job Title: Telecommunications Analyst II

Job Responsibilities: Plan, coordinate, and manage the installation of telephone systems and services for state agencies in North Dakota. I also provide consulting services and make recommendations on how state agencies can better utilize our telecommunications systems to improve service to their customers.

Years of Service: 19

Educational Background: Attended Bismarck State College and University of North Dakota.

Who do you consider to be your customer? To me, a customer is any state agency or employee in need of assistance with their telecommunications system or services; as well as those people outside state government who use the telecommunications services we provide for state agencies.